Master Trainer Course— ABCS Interoperability

The Communications-Electronics Command (CECOM) Product Manager (PdM) Fire Support Command and Control (C^2) New Equipment Training Team (NETT) at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, is offering a new course that teaches how to integrate the Army battle command system (ABCS) suite: the Master Trainer Course.

The Army is fielding ABCS equipment to enhance planning, situational awareness and combat operations control. Because these systems must interface, the NETT's horizons have expanded beyond "stovepipe" stand-alone training.

Master Trainer Course Details. From the advanced FA tactical data system (AFATDS) to the Centaur, the four-week Master Trainer Course covers critical skills needed in the tactical operations center (TOC), battalion and higher, and the TOC's supporting units. The course offers hands-on training on the pocket forward entry device (PFED), rugged handheld computer (RHC), effects management tool (EMT) and ABCS integrated server (AIS). On other ABCS systems, students train via the simulator/stimulator training device (SISTIM).

The Master Trainer Course, a train-the-trainer course, is a one-stop ABCS interoperability training opportunity for Field Artillerymen, both Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC), offered at Fort Sill or, as an option, units' home stations. Students must have basic AFATDS skills. After a short AFATDS review and database construction, students integrate all fielded ABCS systems.

During home station training, a brigade or higher echelon fire support staff may incorporate its common ground station (CGS) into the training. If a CGS is not available, the NETT uses service-based architecture software to simulate CGS traffic. For the AFATDS operator, it is an opportunity to interact with systems he might use in an ABCS environment.

Fire support equipment training is another component of the course. The training focuses on hardware setup, communications and message processing, and fire mission processing.

There is no final written test. Graduation depends on Soldiers' demonstrating their abilities to connect and establish communications with the ABCS systems.

Other Digital Training. The Fire Support NETT offers other training.

AFATDS NETT. The last few units are completing their AFATDS new equipment fielding. Unit training to update to AFATDS Version 6.4Z also is ongoing at various locations worldwide.

AFATDS NETT GWOT Sustainment Training. This provides AFATDS sustainment training for units resetting after having redeployed from the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Units must request and fund the training.

AFATDS Distance-Learning Sustainment Training. This new distance-learning course is in its pilot phase and primarily will accommodate RC units, although AC units can participate in the training. It has a 120-hour program of instruction (POI) to be completed in 15 weekends over a 15-month period.

The course will be a cost-effective alternative to the unit's sending Soldiers on temporary duty (TDY) to the NETT location. The first course is projected to begin on 8 July.

For the distance-learning training, units will receive DVDs and VHS videocassettes via the mail that contain read-ahead materials for the various systems. These resources will enhance Soldier skills to maximize the training time and the final command post exercise (CPX).

AFATDS Subject Matter Expert (SME) Course. This is four weeks long at Fort Sill with an option for home station training and teaches AFATDS critical skills. The course emphasizes four areas: fire support, fire direction, sustainment training and development of standing operating procedures (SOP).

The SME course was designed for the RC Soldier, but anyone who needs training may attend. This course is an alternative for Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) 13C Tactical Automated Fire Control Systems Specialist and 13E Cannon Fire Direction Specialist conversion into MOS 13D FA Tactical Data Systems Specialist.

The course uses AFATDS compact computer units 2 (CCU2s) and AFATDS Tadpoles or trainer laptops similar to the Tadpoles but not ruggedized. Two students use each system, and they work in pairs during the class.

To graduate, individuals take the final hands-on and written tests. During the last few days after testing, Soldiers work on individual SOPs to take back to their unit.

For information about the courses, call James Eckhardt, NETT Training Developer, in CECOM Fire Support C^2 NETT Operations at commercial (580) 442-4892/4782 or DSN 639-4892/4782 or email him at james.eckhardt@sill.army.mil. See the figure for the Master Trainer and AFATDS SME Course dates at Fort Sill.

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Master Trainer Course		
Class #	**Dates**	**# Students**
1-2006	1-19 May	15
2-2006	10- Jul-4 Aug	15
3-2006	6 Nov-1 Dec	15
1-2007	9 Apr-4 May	15
2-2007	4-29 June	15
3-2007	23 Jul-17 Aug	15
4-2007	12 Nov-7 Dec	15
AFATDS SME Course		
Class #	**Dates**	**# Students**
3-2006	5-29 Sep	40
4-2006	10 Oct-3 Nov	40
1-2007	8 Jan-2 Feb	40
2-2007	12 Feb-9 Mar	40
3-2007	3-28 Sep	40
4-2007	8 Oct-2 Nov	40

Master Trainer Course and Advanced FA Tactical Data System (AFATDS) Subject Matter Expert (SME) Course Schedules for the Rest of 2006 and 2007